



Resolution in Process: Innovative Peacebuilding Techniques as a Form of Conflict Transformation

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Abstract

As a society we are faced with pervasive and complex threats to human security. Human security can be defined as the protection of essential needs needed for society to thrive while protecting our environment and society as a whole. Threats to human security globally are broad reaching and impact society in varying degrees of severity. Some of these threats include poverty, hunger, lack of access to education and medical care, and conflict. This research primarily focuses on the lasting impacts of intractable conflicts and a possible model that could place power in the hands of everyday citizens to make lasting change in their communities. While community based response may not be able to rectify all facets of the conflict it could assist in making an environment that is ripe for negotiations to begin or restart. The conflict that is the focus of this case study used to provide a basis using the arts as a tool for innovative peacebuilding is the Arab/Israeli conflict.



Main Arguments

“The *poetics of the oppressed* is essentially the poetics of liberation: the spectator no longer delegates power to the characters either to think or act in his place. The spectator frees himself; he thinks and acts for himself! Theater is action! Perhaps the theater is not revolutionary in itself; but have no doubts, it is a rehearsal of revolution”

-Augusto Boal



Photo of Augusto Boal
<http://www.chiaroscuromagazine.com/critique/augusto-boal-theatre-oppressed.html>

Important terminology

Intractable Conflict-are those conflicts that can be considered stubborn or hard to deal with, because those in charge of the conflict would prefer not to meet at the negotiation table possibly because the status quo is working for them and they are benefiting from the conflict. This type of conflict can also include conflicts that seemingly have many different interests and positions that have become entangled with one another. As well, some other factors can include length of the conflict, the presence of political extremists and third parties that seemingly benefit from the conflict, weakness on one or both sides to implement change, and they often occur in regions of the world where the ability to have security is low and they are poorly connected to richer, safer areas of the world.

Unstable Peace- according to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and Lund it is when tensions and suspicion between two groups is high but violence is nonexistent or sporadic

Crisis-is defined as confrontations between armed forces that are ready to fight but are not currently involved in long lasting battles.

Conflict Transformation-according to Cohen, Gutierrez Varea, and Walker is a process which includes “negotiation, mediation, and diplomacy”, as well as relies on the population responding in good faith and in a rational way. This is considered to be the formal process by which peace is achieved, this process includes high level officials meeting, meetings between NGOs and civil society, and the signing of formal peace agreements; in a way this process can be considered a top down approach where laws are created in order to resolve conflict and once implemented the public should respond.

Conflict Resolution- according to Cohen, Gutierrez Varea, and Walker it “addresses human conflict through nonviolent approaches that increase mutual understanding and respect. Conflict transformation is flexible, both in structure and process, and views peace as continuously evolving and developing quality of relationships, rather than a finite outcome.” Conflict transformation can be considered a bottom-up approach; this is because it starts in everyday life and requires that trust be one of the main aspects of building a sustainable resolution that mends and changes with time

Current Map of Israel

<https://www.aipac.org/learn/resources/maps/israel-today>



Image from Broadway show/movie about Egypt/Israel relations. Picture from thebandsvisitmusical.com



Conclusion

Theatre and the arts can play a prominent role in expanding opportunities for people to come together to share their cultures and opinions. While traditionally peacebuilding may have occurred once the conflict had officially concluded, there is merit in starting the process earlier. By starting pathways that increase communication between groups in conflict at the community level it is possible to have this replicated in the governmental structure over time. Conflicts do not resolve themselves overnight, especially those whom have been labelled intractable conflict. It is important that the world acknowledges the impact of conflict and creates a way to communicate with one another. The arts work well as a way to communicate for some people. The picture of a musical poster below is from a movie turned Broadway musical called “The Bands Visit”. This play at its core explains confusion yet commonality between Israeli settlers and an Egyptian Band. The band arrives in a very small town and soon realizes that they have arrived in the wrong place but the Israelis welcome them with open arms and both groups are forever changed because of this encounter. This piece of theatre/movie art provides a quick snapshot in to an average day that turns into something more. The hope of this research is to replicate these moments into everyday lives of those in conflict. While the arts cannot work on their own they can be used to give agency to everyday people.

Case Study: Conclusion

Education through expression is a needed facet of the conflict transformation process in relation to the Israel/Palestine conflict. This conflict while seemingly intractable and cyclical in nature, which has had the ability to adapt, is a conflict that is ripe for change. This change should take place at the societal level to prepare them for a more formal negotiation process further down the line. While Israel/Palestine in general does not appear to be a war zone, tourists can travel freely and never seen any signs of conflict, the day to day interactions between the Israelis and Palestinians can be tense and lacking of general mutual trust. This trust can be built by implementing tools for everyday peace which we see occurring with the participants of Circus Galilee. Overall, it is important that a new process begins that is sustainable and safely brings people together. As well as enhancing theatre tools and building a sustainable organization it is important to provide new paths for understanding the conflict and for measuring its success. In order for a theatre company to be sustainable it will be integral that the process is documented and that participants are tracked after completion of the program. Ultimately, over time hopefully there will be a shift that moves from a growing and constant population of the youth willing to raise arms against the other to a population willing and wanting to express themselves through the power of the spoken word and the arts. While occupation or whatever you may want to call it exists in the region, resistance is occurring and it should be identified not for violent retaliation but for the purposes of conflict resolution and transformation.

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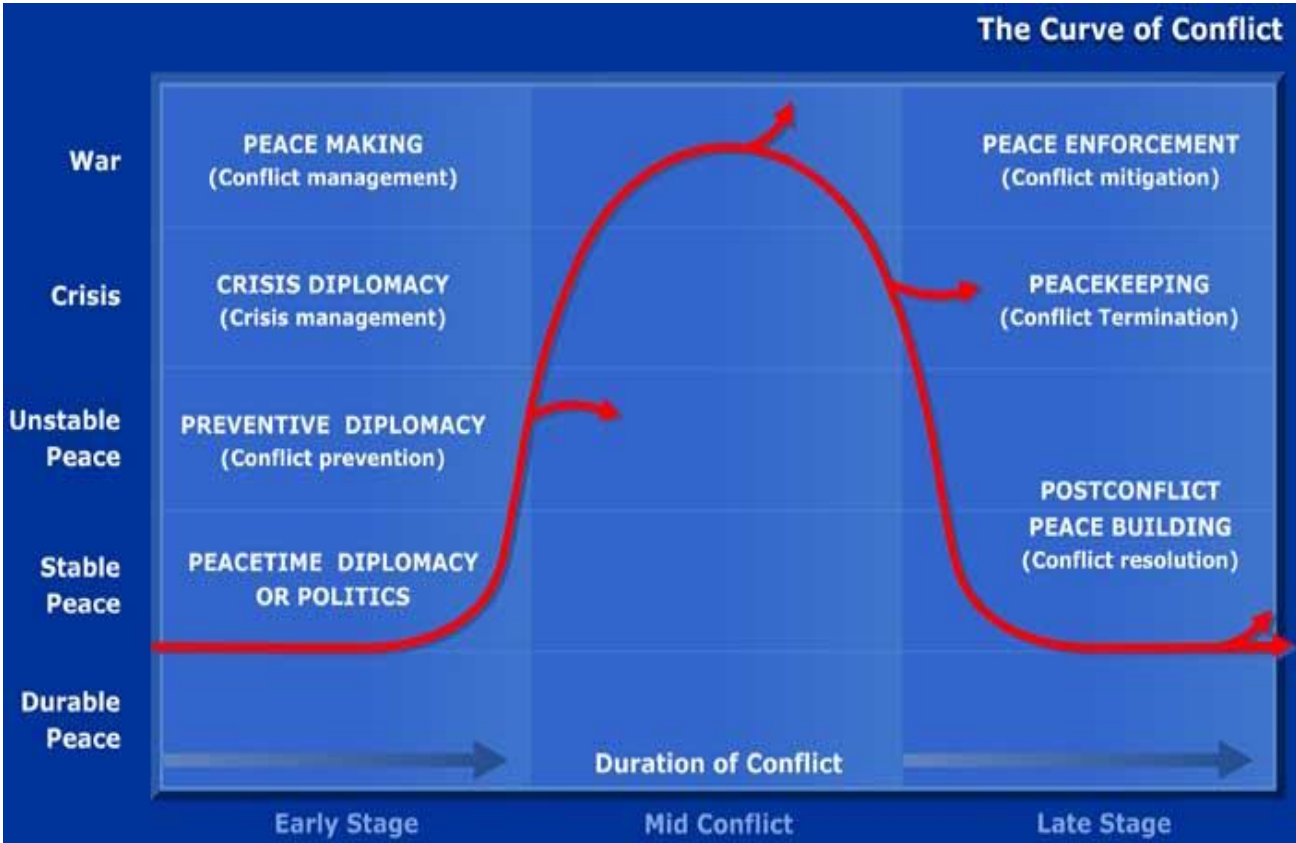
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Key Questions

- 1) What is conflict transformation and coexistence building?
- 2) What are some terms related to conflict?
- 3) What are innovative peacebuilding techniques?
- 4) Why theatre?
- 5) Why the Arab/Israeli Conflict? Why now?



Strategic Peacebuilding Pathways (Wheel)
The graphic was created by developed by John Paul Lederach, professor of international peacebuilding, and Katie Mansfield, M.A. '08 found at University of Norte Dame Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies



Lund's Curve of Conflict
United States Institute of Peace